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ABSTRACT

Since 1873, Maine has financed the private school education of thousands of K-12 students. This lets parents in towns without traditional public schools choose from a list of approved private and public schools, enroll their children, and have the town pay the tuition up to an authorized amount. The town receives full or partial reimbursement from the state. In fall 1999, 5,614 students from 55 communities attended a variety of private schools through this program, while 30,412 attended public schools. Data from the Maine Department of Education suggest that the tuition program costs roughly $6,000 per student (20 percent less than Maine's average per pupil expenditure for public education). Families weigh such factors as goals and aspirations for their children and special programs when choosing schools. Anecdotal evidence suggests that public schools in choice areas respond to the competition by attempting to improve school services. Repeatedly, citizens vote to keep this system, which has been described as "the most valued attribute" of living in Maine. However, this feature of the educational system is limited to students who live in the "right" towns. This paper recommends that policymakers seek to facilitate greater educational opportunities for all students. (SM)

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Lessons from Maine

Education Vouchers for Students since 1873

by Frank Heller

No. 66 September 10, 2001

Executive Summary

Since 1873 Maine has financed the education of thousands of kindergarten through 12th grade students in private schools. In fact, the state pays tuition for 35 percent of all students enrolled in Maine's private schools. The tuition program enables parents in towns without a traditional public school to choose a school from a list of approved private and public schools, enroll their child, and have the town pay that child's tuition up to an authorized amount. The town then receives full or partial reimbursement from the state. In the fall of 1999, 5,614 students from 55 different communities attended private schools through this program, while 30,412 attended nearby public schools. Schools of choice ranged from regular public schools to local academies such as Waynflete School in Portland, Maine, to boarding schools ranging from Choate and Phillips Exeter in New England to Vail Valley Academy in Colorado. Data from the Maine Department of Education suggest that the tuition program costs roughly $6,000 per student, or 20 percent less than Maine's average per pupil expenditure for public education.

Time and time again citizens have voted to keep this system that has been described as "the most valued attribute" of living in Maine. It's unfortunate that one of the best features of Maine's educational system is limited to students who live in the "right" towns. Maine's policymakers should seek to facilitate greater educational opportunities for all students, and policymakers nationwide should look to Maine's extensive experience with vouchers to inform their education reform efforts.

Frank Heller is an educational policy analyst and advocate of school choice. He is a cofounder of the Maine Children's Scholarship Fund, a privately funded organization that provides scholarships to children from low-income families to attend private schools.

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Any student who lives in a town without a public school is eligible for tuition reimbursement, which can be used for either an out-of-district public school or an approved private school.

Introduction

Across the United States, legislators and education policy analysts increasingly discuss the merits of market-based reform measures such as charter schools, tax credits, and vouchers. Although vouchers in particular have been a lightning rod of controversy, they have been routinely used in Maine to send tens of thousands of students to schools of their parents' choice since 1873. Few analysts have paid much attention to this system of school choice, although it is the most extensive system in the United States.

Many towns in Maine have traditionally been considered too small to maintain a local public school. Under Maine's tuition program, any student who lives in a town without a public school is eligible for tuition reimbursement, which can be used for either an out-of-district public school or an approved private school. It should be noted, however, that some towns have written contracts with particular private or public schools, which can limit the choices available to students in those towns.

For generations, some families have chosen from among independent academies and public schools, including many of the finest preparatory schools in New England. Those options used to include schools owned by religious orders, something precluded by the state since 1983.[1]

Although tuition reimbursement is generally available only in communities without public schools,[2] research suggests that the availability of tuition reimbursement has created greater competition among schools in regions where this form of school choice is available. The tuition program appears to have spurred improvements in schools and led to more specialization.[3]

Other benefits of the program include lower costs. Data from the Maine Department of Education suggest that the tuition program costs approximately $6,000 per student, or 20 percent less than Maine's average per pupil expenditure for public education.[4]

No studies have compared the academic test scores of students who receive vouchers with those of students assigned to traditional public schools, so it is not known whether vouchers have led to improved academic performance. However, the Maine Educational Assessment test shows that students in Maine's private schools have higher test scores than do students in public schools and that students attending private schools are more likely to graduate and obtain a higher education.[5] Given the better performance of students in Maine's private schools, it is likely that the opportunity to attend private school afforded by the voucher program has a positive effect on students' academic achievement.

Not surprisingly, parents in "sending" towns[6] greatly favor the tuition program and the variety of options it affords. In an interview with the author, Jon Reisman,- first selectman of Cooper, Maine, and professor of public policy at the University of Maine, put it this way:

> Cooper's tuitioning system is the major reason why parents . . . move here. . . . School choice is the most valued attribute of living in Cooper. Four years ago, our town was faced with . . . turning over control of where our kids would go to school to the State Department of Education; we refused, since it meant losing our choice of schools.[7]

Other towns have done the same. In Arrowsic, Maine, for instance, 80 percent of the voters rejected an attempt to build a public school, which would have eliminated the voucher program. Parents in other sending towns echo those sentiments and have stymied efforts to eliminate the choice system.[8]

Research on Maine's program suggests that tuition vouchers have increased educational opportunities and improved the quality of educational services for students. At the same time, the program costs taxpayers less than traditional public schools. Unfortu-

nately, this system is limited to students who live in the "right" towns. Maine's policymakers should seek to facilitate greater educational opportunities for all students, and policymakers nationwide should look to Maine's extensive experience with vouchers to inform their education reform efforts.

How the Tuition Program Works: The Example of Arrowsic, Maine

Arrowsic, Maine, is a midcoast town with an estimated 500 residents, located a few miles from Bath, home of Navy shipbuilder Bath Iron Works. Arrowsic was settled in the 1600s, and many descendants of the original settlers still reside there, as do many newcomers who arrived in the 1970s and 1980s. Arrowsic has a mixed population of relocated New Agers and people who make their living by fishing or shipbuilding.

Arrowsic neither owns nor operates any schools, so it qualifies as a sending town. It is a member of School Union 47, which is a group of towns organized under Maine law to ensure that educational services are provided to residents. Each participating town has a school committee of three members, and the school union has a superintendent. Parents in Arrowsic can send their children to any public school in the district or any approved private school.[9] Currently, students can choose among nearly a dozen nearby public and private schools, ranging from the exclusive Center for Teaching and Learning in Edgecomb, Maine, to a Montessori school, to various public schools.

If you are a parent in Arrowsic, Maine, this is how the tuition program works for you:

- First, you visit nearby schools to find the one best suited to your child's needs. Local private schools accommodate your search by marketing their services with open houses, and the school board answers your questions and facilitates the flow of information between you and the public schools.
- If the school accepts your child, it sends an acceptance form to the town clerk, who verifies with a signature that you meet residency requirements. The clerk then sends the signed form to School Union 47.
- Your chosen school sends the tuition bill to the school union, which processes the bill, verifies that services and legal requirements have been met, and forwards the bill to the town treasurer for payment.
- Finally, the state of Maine reimburses the town according to the School Funding Formula. Currently, the maximum reimbursable tuition amount for private elementary school is $4,596. The maximum amounts for secondary school are $6,305 (in-state schools) and $5,732 (out-of-state schools).

The townspeople retain the traditional New England town meeting where budgets and policy options are decided by the people through face-to-face debate and open voting. In 1995 there was a proposal on the agenda to create a study group to investigate the possibility of building and operating an elementary school in conjunction with Georgetown, a neighboring town. During the meeting, town residents asked dozens of questions of the superintendent and the school committee members. Finally, one parent asked whether, if the school were built, children would be able to attend only that school. After a long pause, a school committee member answered yes. After a few more questions, the vote was taken in the packed town hall. About 80 people voted against it, and about 10 voted for it.[10]

A Brief History of Maine's Tuition System

As do those of many long-standing public programs, the roots of town tuition programs go back to the 19th century, when the idea of taxpayer-financed education was gaining acceptance.[11] John Maddaus, associ-

The roots of town tuition programs go back to the 19th century.

ate professor of education at the University of Maine, and Denise Mirochnik, graduate student and research associate in the College of Education, University of Maine, explain:

> In New England, the basic governmental unit responsible for providing education was the town. . . . As the demand for and complexity of education increased, especially at the secondary level, local and state education officials in New England sought ways of providing high school education that were both cost effective and consistent with their belief in local control. Town tuitioning was one result.[12]

In 1873 the Maine legislature enacted the Free High School Act, which included Maine's first tuition-funding provision. The provision allowed towns to pay tuition to the trustees of private academies for the education of town residents.[13] In 1909 the Maine legislature enacted a related law, which required any town not maintaining a high school to pay the tuition of its students to an approved secondary school. Each town that paid the tuition of its students would receive the same proportionate state aid as towns that maintained high schools.

In 1873 the Maine legislature enacted the Free High School Act, which included Maine's first tuition-funding provision.

In 1983 the Maine legislature amended the school funding statutes to reflect the opinion of the Maine attorney general's office that direct reimbursement of a religious school's tuition was a violation of the Supreme Court's 1972 *Nyquist* decision.[14] That decision invalidated a New York statute that authorized direct payments to private religious schools.[15] Two separate cases decided in April and May 1999 by the Maine Supreme Judicial Court and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit ruled that the inclusion of religious schools in Maine's program would violate the U.S. Constitution's establishment clause.[16] Again, the Maine attorney general's office relied on *Nyquist* and prevailed at the appellate level. In October 1999 the U.S. Supreme Court declined to review both Maine cases, letting stand the rulings of the lower courts.

A Statistical Overview of the Tuition Program

Maine has 55 municipalities that do not operate schools but instead tuition all students to surrounding school systems.[17] Parents fortunate enough to live in those towns can choose among many public and private schools. During the 1999–2000 school year, an estimated 1,813 students in grades K–8 and 30,527 high school students were eligible for tuition reimbursement because they lived in a town without a school.[18] As those numbers show, many towns have built elementary schools but continue to send high school students outside the area.

Many elite private schools participated in Maine's tuition program in the 2000–01 school year.[19] In some cases, the cost of tuition is higher than the voucher amount provided by the state. Parent contributions and scholarships can be used to make up the difference, or families can choose another school. Some private schools charge less than the voucher amount.

Private schools go through a basic approval and accreditation process to be eligible for tuition reimbursement, and regulatory requirements vary according to the percentage of tuition that is publicly funded. To be reimbursed by the state, a private school must be nonsectarian, meet the requirements for basic school approval, be incorporated under the laws of Maine or the United States, and comply with reporting and auditing requirements. If a school enrolls 60 percent or more publicly funded students, it must participate in the Statewide Assessment Program.[20] That means the school must abide by Maine's education standards, known as Learning Results, and must administer the Maine Educational Assessment tests. For that reason, those schools are regarded as public schools and treated as such by the Department of Education.[21]

Many headmasters believe that the general reporting requirements are simple but feel

Table 1

Sources of Funding for Maine Students Enrolled in Private Schools, October 1999

Grade	No. Publicly Funded Students	No. Privately Funded Students	Total
Elementary special education	158	135	293
Programs for 4-year-olds	1	473	474
Prekindergarten	0	123	123
Kindergarten	1	992	993
Transitional grade 1	0	3	3
Grade 1	2	782	784
Grade 2	0	756	756
Grade 3	1	710	711
Grade 4	3	705	708
Grade 5	1	669	670
Grade 6	4	651	655
Grade 7	16	589	605
Grade 8	27	575	602
Total elementary	214	7,163	7,377
Grade 9	1,463	672	2,135
Grade 10	1,363	791	2,154
Grade 11	1,216	789	2,005
Grade 12	1,222	769	1,990
Secondary special education	136	153	289
Postgraduates	1	57	58
Total secondary	5,400	3,231	8,631
Grand total	5,614	10,394	16,008

Source: http://www.state.me.us/education/enroll/aproct1999/octprg99.htm

Note: Publicly funded students are those for whom any Maine municipal funds are included in the tuition paid. Special education students may be funded from any school district in the state. Privately funded students are those for whom all tuition is paid by an entity other than municipalities or school districts, such as parents or scholarship organizations.

Over the years, the legislature has attempted to increase the requirements placed on private schools.

that the Maine Educational Assessment test is burdensome because of the resources and time required.[22] Other headmasters see the requirements as "challenges" that will help the schools improve.

Over the years, the legislature has attempted to increase the requirements placed on private schools. There is now an attempt to impose a graduation test on any school in which state-funded students make up 60 percent or more of the student body. That is in addition to the other requirements discussed above. The private schools are resisting that attempt, in part using the argument that they are not being fully compensated for their services since certain public funds that go to regular public schools are not incorporated in the tuition formula. Ironically, state officials lobbied the Bush administration and Congress to exempt the state from the proposed national testing system.[23]

Table 1 shows that publicly funded students make up 35 percent of Maine's private school population. Of Maine's 16,008 students in private schools during the 1999–2000 school year, 5,614 were publicly subsidized.

Every year Maine sets a maximum rate for reimbursing private schools.[24] As reimbursement is made on a per pupil basis, the reimbursement rate is considered the per pupil cost of the tuition program.

To compare the per pupil cost of the tuition program to the average per pupil expenditure for public education, we look to per pupil expenditure figures in the *Digest of Education Statistics*, published by the National Center for Education Statistics.[25] Maine's per pupil expenditure for public elementary and secondary schools for the 2000–01 school year is an estimated $8,100.[26] If we conservatively assume the per pupil cost of the tuition program is $6,305 (the maximum allowable amount for the highest-cost students), we find that the tuition program costs 22 percent less per pupil than Maine's average per pupil expenditure for public education. One reason Maine's per pupil expenditures for public education generally are higher than the per pupil costs of the tuition program is that Maine's public education expenditures include some administrative and capital costs, whereas private schools largely bear those costs under the tuition program.[27]

How Families Choose Schools

Families weigh many factors when choosing schools, including goals and aspirations for their children, family and community custom, impressions made during formal presentations by a school's faculty and alumni and during school tours, cost, how well their children believe they will fit in or adapt to the new school, and unique opportunities and special programs.

When parents speak of being able to select schools, they do so in terms much more complex than those of educators, who are largely concerned with academic performance. In November 1997, the Public Policy Forum of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, issued a report called "School Choice in Cleveland and Milwaukee: What Parents Look For," based on interviews with 270 parents, teachers, and school administrators. The report found that curriculum and method of instruction were of primary concern to parents but that parents also considered many other factors:

> Information on the school's program, primarily its curriculum and method of instruction, is the most common piece of information parents want in making a decision about where to send their children. Information on teachers is the next most common response by parents. The other criteria that parents mention, in order of frequency after school program and teachers, are school characteristics, such as class size and make-up of student body; general student outcomes, such as development of lifetime skills and advancement to the next grade level; safety and discipline at the school; standardized test scores; level of parent involvement; and the

school's reputation. Teachers and school administrators concur with parents in reporting most frequently that information about a school's program is what parents want to know in choosing a school for their children.[28]

Most reports find that parents in choice programs define educational excellence in terms of a combination of factors; the most important are safety, discipline, and instructional quality.[29] In Maine in particular, there is also evidence that parents are influenced by schools' reported standardized test scores and seek to send their children to the best-performing schools. John Maddaus, associate professor of education at the University of Maine, and Scott F. Marion, a graduate student at the University of Colorado-Boulder, studied Maine's system and concluded:

> The results of this study support the notion that published test scores influence parental choice of school. High schools with relatively higher MEA [Maine Educational Assessment] test scores during the first three years of the test were the primary beneficiaries of enrollment shifts in the 43 towns selected for inclusion in this study. Since enrollment trends over the past decade were not simply a continuation of earlier enrollment trends, publication of the MEA scores may have had a direct impact on parents' and students' perceptions of high schools. This finding is especially noteworthy because it is drawn from rural communities, where factors such as community ties, distance, and transportation tend to limit the impact of test score differences on enrollment patterns.[30]

Students, too, may be involved in the selection process, and there is some evidence that this may provide an extra benefit to students. For instance, Barbara L. Hawes, a graduate student at the University of Maine-Orono, used extensive parent and student interviews to probe the complexity of the process by which they select the "best" school to attend.[31] Hawes interviewed 23 students whom she described as "clients" of the selected school. She used a factor matrix that included "structural" and "social" components. Students said the most important factors were atmosphere, school size, athletic programs, academic programs, knowing people at the new school, and having friends at the school. In addition, Hawes found that the ability to play a role in the selection of a school was beneficial to students:

> [While] teachers, administrators and coaches control most of the structural aspects of the school . . . the students often control the social aspects. . . . Therefore, in terms of the investment of time and thought devoted to gaining knowledge about a particular aspect of the school, there may be a more immediate "power" gain for students by investing in the social aspects of the school environment than the structural.[32]

That selection process, then, can increase the power and voice of the students in a school and perhaps empower them in ways they were not before. The process can decrease alienation and withdrawal and enhance success and achievement in the new school through a better match of expectations with skills and capabilities. It can make students and their families better able to choose a path of higher education in a few years. Although it is a small study and not conclusive, Hawes's study suggests that school choice could lead to better-prepared, more-committed, and more-focused students who are better able to avoid critical mistakes and adverse social situations.

Reinforcing academic research are anecdotal reports, such as those of David Hench, reporter for the *Portland Press Herald*. His arti-

Parents in choice programs define educational excellence in terms of a combination of factors; the most important are safety, discipline, and instructional quality.

cle "School Choice Gets High Marks in State" opened the eyes of many people to the educational freedoms of people who live in towns that pay tuition. Hench reported:

> School choice, a dominant issue in the national debate over education reform, already is a reality for Nicky Blanchard and her classmates. . . . The Pownal eighth-graders must decide soon whether to attend high school in Freeport [public] or go to Greely High [private] in Cumberland. . . . "I'm afraid I'll make the wrong choice," Nicky says, her muted voice betraying the anxiety she feels. Students can transfer if they make a bad choice. . . . Nicky is approaching the decision with the same thoughtfulness she might use when choosing a college in four years.[33]

Research and anecdotal evidence together suggest that families in Maine's school choice program consider many factors when selecting their children's schools.

Does Choice Improve Educational Services?

Anecdotal reports suggest that public schools in choice areas respond to the threat of competition by attempting to improve school services.

Over the past decade, there has been speculation among educators and parents about the competition between public and private high schools and the benefits that competition has produced. However, few studies have examined the educational service marketplace.

Anecdotal reports, however, suggest that public schools in choice areas respond to the threat of competition by attempting to improve school services. For instance, many schools in areas with a high concentration of choice students, such as Glenburne Elementary in a suburb of Bangor, have organized regular high school fairs for the graduating eighth graders. The entire program, which includes in-school presentations, informational materials, bus trips to various high schools, and personal visits, is coordinated by Glenburne's principal and its guidance counselor.[34]

In fact, the threat of competition is so strong in the Bangor region that one superintendent complained about outright poaching, saying:

> The vast majority of our kids go to Hermon High [public]. . . . There has always been a low grumble about how our kids are treated, especially in athletics, but now there is a real concern that more students will request to attend a different high school, such as John Bapst [private]. In the past, we have averaged about half-dozen kids per year going somewhere other than Hermon. This year, we anticipate 24 or 25 will make that request. . . . A lot of parents have already informed us they intend to switch schools.[35]

Members of the local school board also placed their children in private schools, according to reports by John Nash of the *Bangor Daily News*. Nash reported:

> At least six former school board members and one current member sent 11 of their 19 children to secondary schools outside the district. One former board member, Mary Wright, voiced a common concern about the academic "slippage" of the district's high schools and told how her family went "school shopping" when their oldest child became an eighth-grader.[36]

Not surprisingly, when parents can choose alternative schools, school administrators become more vigilant and responsive to parental demands. As Superintendent of Schools Richard Lyons put it, "If we're a business and a business is losing its clients, then it behooves us to find out why that is happening."[37]

Other articles support the notion that competition is forcing schools to improve

educational services. Former board member Betsy Chapman explains:

> If a school is successful in attracting 10 extra students, that school system will receive approximately $60,000 more funding. . . . High schools have differentiated themselves by offering unique programs; for example, Brewer High School is reputed to offer more Advanced Placement courses than any other high school in Maine. They cite examples of graduates who virtually start college as sophomores because of the AP credits they earned. About half of Brewer High School students come from the tuition towns. Their competitive advantage benefits those who select that school as well as those who happen to live in Brewer.[38]

News stories also report that parents attempt to establish residency in areas without public schools in order to have a choice of schools. Sometimes families will move to particular areas; other times they cheat by adopting a mailing address in an area without a school to give the appearance of residency.[39]

Although no studies have been undertaken to discover to what degree the voucher program improves schools, anecdotal evidence suggests that schools threatened with competition, at a minimum, attempt to improve educational services in order to retain students.

Conclusion

For more than 100 years, taxpayers in Maine have financed a public education system that allows thousands of students to attend private schools. In the fall of 1999, 5,614 students from 55 different communities attended private schools through this program. Those publicly funded students account for 35 percent of all students enrolled in Maine's private schools. Data from the Maine Department of Education suggest that the tuition program costs approximately $6,000 per student, or 20 percent less than Maine's average per pupil expenditure for public education. Thus, the tuition program gives parents a wider range of schools to choose from at a lower cost to the state than does the traditional public school system.

Perhaps not surprisingly, citizens have voted to keep this system, which has been described as "the most valued attribute" of living in a tuition town. Unfortunately, Maine facilitates choice only for students who live in the "right" towns. Maine's policymakers should expand educational opportunities for all students, and policymakers nationwide should look to Maine's extensive experience with vouchers to refine their education reform efforts.

Vouchers are not radical. School choice is not a leap into the unknown. It's been quietly at work in Maine for 128 years.

Notes

1. Until 1983, tuition for religious schools was routinely reimbursed. Maine no longer pays tuition for children attending religious schools, although the state and local government may pay for busing, nursing services, textbooks, and special education services for students attending religious schools.

2. Exceptions to this rule are sometimes made for students with special needs.

3. John Maddaus and Denise Mirochnik, "Parental Choice Options in Maine," *Journal of Research in Rural Education* 8, no. 1 (Winter 1992): 43. These findings are consistent with research on a variety of educational choice programs. See, for instance, Caroline M. Hoxby, "School Choice and School Productivity (Or, Could School Choice Be a Tide That Lifts All Boats?)," Cambridge, Mass., National Bureau of Economic Research, Inc. Preliminary draft prepared for NBER Conference on the Economics of School Choice, February 23–24, 2001.

4. Most data in this paper come from the Maine Department of Education, which keeps extensive online records of the costs, students, and schools involved in the tuition program. See http://www.state.me.us/education. Information may also be obtained by contacting Patrick Dow, school

For more than 100 years, taxpayers in Maine have financed a public education system that allows thousands of students to attend private schools.

enrollment consultant, patrick.dow@state.me.us, and Suzan Cameron, management information systems team, suzan.cameron@state.me.us.

5. For more information on MEA test scores and graduation rates, see http://janus.state.me.us/education/mea/edmea.htm and http://www.state.me.us/education/enroll/grads/grad.htm.

6. "Sending" is the term used by the state of Maine.

7. Jon Reisman, interview with author, January 2001.

8. David Hench, "School Choice Gets High Marks in State: Recruiting Students Who Have a Choice between Two High Schools Has Led to Competition and Improvement," *Portland Press Herald*, March 13, 1994.

9. Students can attend a public school in another district if the superintendent of that district has given permission.

10. Author's memory of a June 1995 town meeting in Arrowsic, Maine, in which he participated.

11. See, for instance, David W. Kirkpatrick, *Choice in Schooling: A Case for Tuition Vouchers* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1990), p. 34.

12. Maddaus and Mirochnik, p. 31.

13. Ibid., p. 30.

14. Ibid., p. 31.

15. *Committee for Public Education v. Nyquist*, 413 U.S. 756 (1972).

16. *Robert Bagley et al. v. Raymond School Department et al.*, 728 A.2d 127; and *Strout v. Albanese*, 178 F.3d 57 (1st Cir. 1999).

17. The following 55 municipalities (with names of counties in parentheses) tuition resident students to private schools or public schools in other locations: Allagash (Aroostook), Alna (Lincoln), Arrowsic (Sagadahoc), Bancroft (Aroostook), Baring (Washington), Beaver Cove (Piscataquis), Beddington (Washington), Bowerbank (Piscata-quis), Carrabassett Valley (Franklin), Carroll (Penobscot), Centerville (Washington), Cooper (Washington), Coplin (Franklin), Crawford (Wash-ington), Dallas (Franklin), Deblois (Washington), Dennistown (Somerset), Dennysville (Washing-ton), Drew (Penobscot), Gilead (Oxford), Glenwood (Aroostook), Grand Lake Stream (Washington), Hanover (Oxford), Hersey (Aroostook), Highland (Somerset), Kingsbury (Piscataquis), Lakeville (Penobscot), Lincoln (Oxford), Macwahoc (Aroostook), Madrid (Franklin), Magalloway (Oxford), Mariaville (Hancock), Marshfield (Washington), Meddy-bemps (Washington), Medford (Piscataquis), Moro (Aroostook), Nashville (Aroostook), Northfield (Washington), Orient (Aroostook), Pleasant Ridge (Somerset), Prospect (Waldo), Rangeley (Franklin), Rome (Kennebec), Roque Bluffs (Washington), Sandy River (Franklin), Talmadge (Washington), The Forks (Somerset), Upton (Oxford), Verona (Hancock), Waite (Washington), Westmanland (Aroostook), Westport (Lincoln), Whitneyville (Washington), Willimantic (Piscataquis), and Woodville (Penobscot), http://www.state.me.us/education/eddir/noschsau2.htm.

18. See http://www.state.me.us/education/data/ppcosts/2000/00k8.htm and http://www.state.me.us/education/data/ppcosts/2000/00tuit.htm.

19. Those schools included Brewster Academy, New Hampshire; Carrabassett Valley Academy, Maine; Choate Rosemary Hall, Connecticut; Deerfield Academy, Massachusetts; Fryeburg Academy, Maine; Gould Academy, Maine; Groton School, Massachusetts; High Mowing School, New Hampshire; The Hotchkiss School, Connecticut; Holderness, New Hampshire; Hyde School, Maine; Kimball Union Academy, New Hampshire; Mercersburg Academy, Pennsylvania; Phillips Academy, Massachusetts; Phillips Exeter Academy, New Hampshire; Pomfret School, Connecticut; Shorecrest Preparatory School, Florida; St. Paul's School, New Hampshire; Tabor Academy, Massachusetts; Vail Valley Academy, Colorado; and Waynflete, Maine; http://www.state.me.us/education/data/tuitionrates/ptuit01.htm.

20. For more information on Maine's regulatory statutes, see U.S. Department of Education, Office of Non-Public Education, "State Regulation of Private Schools," June 2000, http://www.ed.gov/pubs/RegPrivSchl/maine.html.

21. At least 60 percent of the students in the following private schools in Maine were publicly funded in 2000–01: Erskine Academy, China; Foxcroft Academy, Dover-Foxcroft; Fryeburg Academy, Fryeburg; George Stevens Academy, Bluehill; John Bapst Memorial High School, Bangor; Lee Academy, Lee; Liberty School Inc., Blue Hill; Lincoln Academy, Newcastle; Maine Central Institute, Pittsfield; Washington Academy, East Machias; Thornton Academy, Saco; http://www.state.me.us/education/ eddir/textschs2.htm.

22. For more information on the MEA, see http://www.state.me.us/education/mea/meahome. htm.

23. "Testing Testing," Editorial, *Bangor Daily News*, May 30, 2001.

24. One private secondary school in Maine and two private secondary schools out of state had lower maximum reimbursement rates, but no

schools had higher rates. For more information, see http://www.state.me.us/education/data/tuitionrates/ptuit01.htm.

25. The Maine Department of Education also calculates per pupil cost, but that amount is much lower than estimates provided by the U.S. Department of Education. For instance, the Maine Department of Education calculated per pupil expenses of $5,819 during the 1999-2000 school year, but that figure excludes transportation costs, debt repayment, and capital costs among other things. Figures from the U.S. Department of Education, on the other hand, include such costs as capital outlays and interest on school debt, thus giving a more complete picture of actual per pupil costs.

26. The most recent school year for which per pupil expenditures are available is 1997-98. To derive estimates for the 2000-01 school year, I found the average yearly growth rate in expenditures for each school year from 1990 to 1998 (3.82 percent) and assumed it was the same for the 1998-99, 1999-2000, and 2000-01 school years. Thus I estimate that per pupil spending was $7,514 for 1998-99, $7,802 for 1999-2000, and $8,100 for 2000-2001; National Center for Education Statistics, *Digest of Education Statistics 2000* (Washington: Government Printing Office, January 2001), NCES-2001-034, Table 168, http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2001/digest/dt168.html.

27. Private school reimbursement is determined by a complex formula. In general, the reimbursement rate reflects the lesser of the private school's tuition or the state's average per pupil expenditure, excluding expenditures on special education, vocational education, community services, major capital outlay, debt retirement, and transportation.

28. "School Choice in Cleveland and Milwaukee: What Parents Look For," Public Policy Forum, Milwaukee, November 1997, p. 2.

29. Philip Vassallo, "More Than Grades: How Choice Boosts Parental Involvement and Benefits Children," Cato Institute Policy Analysis no. 383, October 26, 2000.

30. John Maddaus and Scott F. Marion, "Do Standardized Test Scores Influence Parental Choice of High School?" *Journal of Research in Rural Education* 11, no. 2 (Fall 1995): 81.

31. Barbara L. Hawes, "Toward an Understanding of the Student as a Client: A Preliminary Study" (master's thesis, University of Maine, August 1994).

32. Ibid., p. 37.

33. Hench.

34. Carolyn Leick, principal of Glenburne Elementary School, interview by the author, February 4, 2001.

35. Quoted in Judy Harrison, "Parents in SAD 23 Still Question Educators," *Bangor Daily News*, January 5, 2001.

36. John Nash, "Shortcomings in SAD 22 Cited," *Bangor Daily News*, January 4, 1996.

37. Quoted in ibid.

38. Betsy Chapman, unpublished letter sent to *Portland Press Herald*, January 3, 2000.

39. Emily Adams, "Families Find Way to School Choice: SAD 46 Families Establish Bangor Residency to Avoid Tuition," *Bangor Daily News*, March 13, 1996.

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